



7 November 2006

Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Day Safety Messages

1. We will celebrate two special holidays in November – Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Day. While all Americans are familiar with the history of Thanksgiving, Veterans Day is a holiday for us to honor all those who have served before us and those who are serving now, both here and around the world. Originally called Armistice Day to commemorate the ending of World War I, in 1954 the name of the holiday was changed to Veterans Day to honor those who served in World War II and the Korean War. Today, the holiday honors all veterans for their selfless service.

2. Of course, Thanksgiving allows us to remember our many blessings and bounties. For those accompanied Servicemembers and civilian employees, it is a time to be with family and open our homes to those who are separated from their loved ones this year. Notably, both of these holidays include four-day weekends and many of our USFK team members will take advantage of the time off to travel and enjoy the beautiful sites in the Republic of Korea. We do not want these long weekends to be marred by a tragic death. To avoid needless tragedy and ensure our personnel return to their duties safely, first-line leaders must obtain a verbal behavior contract with their subordinates by conducting Under the Oak Tree Counseling. The procedures to be followed are contained in [Command Policy Letter #2, "Under the Oak Tree Counseling"](#).

Leaders at all levels are responsible and accountable for the behavior and safety of their subordinates. Areas to focus on during the upcoming holiday periods include the following:

- **Personal Accountability.** This is a core responsibility of leaders at all levels. Help your subordinates incorporate risk management into their holiday activity plans by emphasizing personal responsibility, hazards of alcohol abuse, indiscipline, and the requirement to employ the buddy system ([Command Policy Letter #6, "Buddy System"](#)). All too often abuse of alcohol contributes directly to the death or injury of one of our Servicemembers.
- **Traffic Safety.** Help your subordinates prepare for their travel and recreational activities. If someone plans to drive, ensure they are counseled IAW our [Winter Safety Campaign Memorandum](#) and understand the unique fall and winter driving conditions of Korea.

3. With everyone's awareness and active participation, our goal of no deaths, no sexual assaults, and no serious injuries is absolutely achievable. We must take care of each other and remain ever vigilant. We are accountable. I wish each of you safe holidays and I thank you for your continued selfless commitment to our Nation and to our Armed Forces. We go together!

B. B. BELL
General, US Army
Commander

FREEDOM'S FRONTIER!

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